1943
NEW ZEALAND

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE

(REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1943

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in accordance with Section 47 of the Public Trust Office Amendment Act, 1913.

PURSUANT to section 47 of the Public Trust Office Amendment Act, 1913, I have the honour to lay before Parliament the report on the working of the Public Trust Office for the year ended 31st March, 1943.

The report discloses that, in the face of acute shortage of trained staff and other special difficulties resulting from the war, the Office has experienced another successful year. New business valued at £7,283,693 was secured, and new wills to the record number of 11,059 were received.

The total value of estates under administration and the number of wills on deposit are impressive, and afford convincing evidence of the continued public confidence which the Office enjoys.

H. G. R. MASON,
Minister in Charge of the Public Trust Office.

Wellington, 16th June, 1943.

REPORT ON THE WORKING OF THE PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1943

Public Trust Office, Wellington C. 1, 14th June, 1943.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit a report on the working of the Public Trust Office for the financial year ended 31st March, 1943.

NEW BUSINESS

1. During the year 3,695 estates and funds, of a total value of £7,283,693, were accepted for administration, as compared with 3,549, of a value of £6,514,988, in the previous year.
2. The administration of 3,155 estates was completed during the year.
3. At the close of the year the total number of estates and funds remaining under administration was 20,995, of an aggregate value of £66,777,793, as against 20,455, valued at £64,685,685, at the end of the previous year. These figures do not include cases where the Public Trustee is required by statute to examine and report upon the accounts of persons who are administering the estates of mental patients and aged and infirm persons, or where the Public Trustee's duties are not of an active character—*e.g.*, trusteeships for debentureholders. The value of these estates and funds is £2,165,986, a decrease of £31,000 upon the previous year's figures.
4. In the past year 11,059 new wills appointing the Public Trustee executor were placed on deposit as against the figure of 10,955 for the previous year.
5. At the end of the year 121,104 wills were on deposit with the Public Trustee, this being 7,891 greater than the number held at the beginning of the year.
6. To provide for alterations desired by testators, 4,811 wills were redrafted in the course of the year, as against 4,896 in the previous year.
7. Visits to the various military camps and air force stations were continued during the year, and a large number of wills was prepared for members of the forces who desired to appoint the Public Trustee their executor.

ENEMY PROPERTY EMERGENCY REGULATIONS 1939

8. During the year the Public Trustee, as Custodian of Enemy Property, has carried out the duties cast upon him by the Enemy Property Emergency Regulations 1939. Funds representing enemy property collected or realized by the Public Trustee and now held amount to £262,165.

Enemy property, together with the income therefrom controlled by the Custodian of Enemy Property, is held in trust for all persons having any interest in such property. The money is invested in accordance with the directions of the Minister of Finance.

INVESTMENTS FROM THE COMMON FUND

9. *Lending Operations.*—Difficulty has again been experienced in obtaining suitable mortgage investments, and in many instances mortgagors have repaid part of their loans on obtaining renewals. During the year mortgages to the value of over £1,225,000 were renewed.

10. *Collection of Interest.*—A further reduction in the total amount of arrears has been made during the year.

FINANCE

11. *Annual Accounts.*—The year's operations resulted in a net profit, subject to audit, of £12,766, after making provision for bad debts and for depreciation on Office buildings and other property. Included in the charges against Profit and Loss Account for the year were war damage insurance premiums on Office property and mortgage securities £7,850, E.P.S. expenditure £609, and taxation £23,464.

12. *Investment of Funds.*—Disregarding short-term deposits, new investments totalling £2,094,948 were completed during the year. Including investments made by the Public Trustee on behalf of estates and funds, the investments held by the Office on 31st March, 1943, amounted to £40,356,303, which represents an increase of £854,470 compared with those held at the end of the previous year.

13. *Advances to Estates and Beneficiaries.*—The advantages of the statutory provisions whereby the Public Trustee is able to advance money on the security of the assets of, or of a vested interest in, an estate administered by him, have continued to be fully availed of by estates and beneficiaries. Advances of this nature granted during the year amounted to £86,896, and the total amount secured in this way amounted at 31st March, 1943, to £618,230.

LEGAL DIVISION

14. During the year administration was obtained in 2,703 estates. Other Court applications for leave to take steps necessary in administration, but not authorized by the will or by statute, numbered 66, while in 2 cases it was necessary to file a certificate under Part IV of the Administration Act electing to administer the estate concerned as insolvent. In addition, 28 exemplifications of probate or administration granted abroad and 74 exemplifications of New Zealand grants were sealed, and 45 powers of attorney issued, to enable assets situated outside the countries in which the original grant was made to be dealt with.

An important function of the Legal Division is investigating the possibility of claims for compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act in respect of estates administered by the Public Trustee, obtaining orders for the apportionment of compensation which has been awarded or paid, and furnishing the Court with reports on applications for apportionment made by other persons.

INSPECTIONS AND AUDITS

15. In view of the wartime shortage of staff, the officers who normally inspected the work of the branches have been engaged on other duties. Regular inspections have been discontinued for the time being, and an inspection is performed only where this is considered justified by special circumstances.

At each branch a comprehensive system of continuous check on the transactions in respect of cash, securities, and deeds is in operation. A supplementary check on the cash transactions only is conducted by the Audit Department, which relies on the Office check in respect of other transactions. The two systems are co-ordinated by the Chief Inspector.

CONCLUSION

16. In submitting this report I desire to place on record my appreciation of the co-operation and assistance given to me by the Assistant Public Trustees and of the services rendered by the staff at the Head Office and the district offices and by the agents throughout the Dominion, all of whom have worked untiringly and whole-heartedly to render faithful service to the Department and its clients.

Cordial thanks are also due to the members of the Investment Board for the assistance given by them throughout the year in the consideration of applications for loans, the renewal of mortgages, and other incidental matters relating to the investments of the Office.

I have, &c.,
W. G. Baird,
Public Trustee.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge of the Public Trust Office.

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